

Here begynneth Octavian
the Emperoure of Rome.



Here begynneth þe hystory of Octauyan Em-
perour of Rome.

Iyste lordshes both olde & yinge
And hekke to my swete talkshye
Of whome I wyll you lythe
Ihesu that is our heuen kynge
Gyue vs all his dcre blessinge
And make vs gladde & blythe

Trewe tales I wyll you saye
How it befell vpon a daye
And ye wyll lysten and lythe
In bokes of Rome as it is tolde
How it befell amonge our elders olde
Ofte and fell sythe
Somtyme there was an emperour
In rome of grete honour
In romayns as men can rede
That man was of grete honour
He lyued in Joye and fauoure
As a doughty man of dede
In tournement and in fyght
In the worlde was none so wyght
As he was vnder wede
Octauyan the emperour hyght
Of all the worlde he was the noblest knyght
And a noble man of dede
An emperesse he hadde to his wyfe
One of the fayrest that euer bare lyfe
Thus say clerkes vs vnto
Seuen yere they hadde togydet ben
With Joye and myrthe the betwene

As hyt befell tho
The emperour vpon a daye
In his chynbze gan spozte and playe
With his emperesse bryght
He behelpe her fayre chere
That was as whyte as blossom on biers
And semely was on syght
A sorowe to his herte come
That he myght haue chyldzen none
Theyr londes to welde by ryght
By his lady he hym sette
For vpon her his mynde was knette
He was so kynde a knyght
Whan the lady gan it se
She chaunged all her fayre ble
And syghed wonder soze
She fell on knees her lorde agayne
And of his sorowe gan hym frayne
And of his grete care
Good lorde yf it were youre wyll
Your counseyll that you wolde brynge me tyll
And of your lyues fare
Your counseyll to me that ye dy scouer
And for me hit shall neuer forther
I shall it kepe whyles I maye dure
And in his armes he gan get folde
And all his counseyll to her tolde
How his hert was ybounde
We haue seuen yere togyder bene
And haue no chyldzen ys betwene
We shall lyue bothe but a stoude
I ne wote how my sone shall fare

Octa.

All.

But lyue in sorowe and in care
Whan I am to bedde brought
I slepe full yll/vnsunde on nyght
Thenne answered that lady bryght
Syr I can tell you I haue bethought
A ryche abbaye we wyll make
For our dere ladies sake
And londres gyue thre tyll
We wyll praye her sonne so fayre
That we may gette a good aye
Our londe to welde at wyll
They lete make an abbaye tho
The lady werte with chyldren two
As hyt was goddes wyll fre
At the last hit befell tho
The lady was delyuered of of chyldren two
That semely was to se
Tythynge came to the emperoure
There he laye in his toure
A gladde man was he
Two ladies brought hyni worde
They had gyftes that were good
The had bothe golde and fe
The emperoure rose with mylde mode
To his chapell there he youde
He thanked god of his sonde
Erly or ony daye byde sprynge
He made a prest masse to synge
His moder ther he founde
Sone she sayd I am full blythe
That the emperesse shall haue her lyue
And lyue with vs in londe

2
But moche sorowe dzedeth me
That Rome shall wronge arayed be
And in straunge mennes honde
Moder he sayde why saye ye so
Nowe I haue men chyldren two
I thanke god of his sonde
Naye she sayd sone myne
Well I wote they are not thyne
It lyketh me full yll in londe
For thou myghtest no chyldren haue
Thy wyfe hath taken a cokes knaue
I wyll hyt proue by skyll
A sorowe to the emperours herte came
That worde myght he speke none
She yede away full skyll
To her chambze forthe she yode
The emperour styll at masse stode
As a man that was in care
The emperours moder called a knaue
And hyght hym gyftes for to haue
A.C. ponde and more
To the emperours cambze þ knaue take þ waye
There the empres in chyldbed laye
A slepe was she there
For why she had waked so longe
In payne and in care strange
Or she delyuered were
Hast the with all thy myght
Dreuely that thou were vndyght
And that thou be vncladde
Softely by her thou in crepe
That she wake not of her slepe

Octa.

A.iii.

Full leke she is bestadde
Hastely was the knaue uncladde
And in he wente as she hym badde
In to the ryche bede
But euer the knaue drewe hym awaye
Of the ryches that on hym laye
He was full soze adzadde
To the emperour sorowne she wente
And bad hym come in good entent
At the masse there he stode
Sone yf thou belcue not me
The sothe mayste thou now se
To the chambze with her he yode
Whan he sawe the spght than
A sorowe to his herte ranne
That well nere he wexed wode
The grome he sawe in the bedde
The ryche clothes were ouer hym spzedde
Of that gylte he thought not good
The lady laye fast on slepe
A dolefull dreame gan she mete
That was so lyght a wyght
She thought that she was in a wyldernesse
In sorowe and in grete heuy nesse
That she myght haue no spght
She thought there came fleyng
A dragon with the fyre brennyng
That all the worlde was lyght
And in his paues brennyng blowe
Up he toke her chyldren two
And awaye toke his flyght
Therwith the lady began to wake

A doulefull gromynge gan she make
And she syghed full sore
The emperour sterte to the grome
The here in honde he hent anone
The heed he smete of there
In he keste it to the bedde
The ryche clothes were all to bledde
Of ryche golde though it were
The grete treason that there was wrought
The lady slepte and knewe it nought
Her dyscomfort was the more
Woꝛde of this they spake no mo
Tyll the emperesse to chyrche sholde go
As the lawe was in that lede
The emperoure made a fest I vnderstande
To kynges that were in dyuers londe
Of many alonde of far stede
The kyng of Calabze without las
That the emperesse father was
Theder gan hym bede
All they sembled vpon a daye
With Joye and game and moche playe
To the chyrche the lady yode
The kynges dwellyde there in same
There was bothe Joye and game
At that ryche dynere
With good metes and drynkes amonge
Of harpe, lute and good songe
Lute and good sauttre
Tyll the seven dayes were all gone
With all welthes in that wone
And myrth of mynstrells

Octa.

A. lili.

There was neuer so ryche a gaderynge
That had so soyr a departynge
I shall tell you why
Grete dole it was to tell
Upon a daye howe it befell
Herken and ye maye here
The emperour to his chambze yode
And his knyghtes aboute hym stode
With a full gladde chere
The emperour sayd I vnderstonde
Suche auenture was in that londe
By a lady as ye shall here
All that treason he tolde them sone
And asked what Iugement shoulde be done
And what she worthy were
Whan the emperour had his tale tolde
The kyng of calebre answered bolde
He wyll not what it ment
Syr he sayde for her sake
I grete fyre I shall do make
This is my Iugement
Whan the fyre is brounyng fast
She and her chylde to be cast
To deth for to be brente
The emperoure answered full sone
Thy owne doughter hath this done
I holde to myne assente
There was dole and grete pyte
A fyre they made without the cyte
With bꝛondes bꝛennynge bryght
To the fyre they layde the lady there
Two squyers her chylde byde bere

That semely were to syght
In a kytell of scarlet reed
To the fyre they led her to be deed
All redy she is dyght
The kynge of calebze made euyl chere
For sorowe myght not stāde his doughter nere
There wepte bothe kynge and knyght
The lady sawe no better reed
But she must nedes be deed
That daye in the felde
With sozpy herte the sothe to tell
Before the emperour on knes she fell
And bothe her handes vp helde
Graunt me lord for Ihesus sake
That I myght a prayer make
To hym that all shall welde
And than to do with me your wyll
What deth that ye wyll put me tyll
Therto I wyll me yelde
The lady on her knes her sette
And Ihesu cryst ofte she grete
No wonder thoughe she was wo
She sayd lord and kynge of blysse
This daye thou wylte me rede and wyll she
And heuen quene also
Mayde mary moder fre
My prayer wyll I make to the
For my chyldren two
As thou lete them be bozne of me
Graunt that they may crystened be
Or they to deth sholde go
Kynge and quenes that aboute were

And And ladyes fell in sowynge there
And knyghtes stode wepyng
The emperoure stode her full nere
The teres fell downe on his lere
Full soze he byde there stonde
The emperour spake a worde of pyte
Dame he sayd thy Deth I wyll not se
With herte ne with hande
The emperour gaue her leue to go
And toke her her chyldren two
And badde her go out of the londe
The emperoure gaue her forty ponde
Of flozences that were rede and rounde
In geste as we now rede
He commauded her knyghtes two
Out of the londe her for to lede tho
The two knyghtes her chyldren bare
To what londe that she leuest were
She was full soze aferde there
The kynge frome the parlyament
Euery lord to his owne londe went
And there dwelled with good entente
For sorowe theyr hertes gan blede there
That lady came in to a wyldernesse
That full of wylde beestes was
The woode was stronge and thicke
The knyghtes toke the lady her chyldren two
And toke her golde and bade her go
As the waye laye full ryght
They bade her holde the hye strete
For drede with wylde beestes for to mete
That moche were of myght

Agayne the knyghtes wente with soȝy mode
Alone the emperesse forth yode
As a wofull wyght
She had so wepte here befoꝛne
That het ryght waye she had forloꝛne
So moche she was in thought
In a woode that was full thyecke
What for hylles and leues eke
Het waye founde she nought
In a sloughe vnder an hyl
Sowne she founde a fayre well
And an arbere redy wrought
With olyue tress the arbere was sette
The lady let her downe and wepte
Fetther go she ne myght
The lady by the well her sette
With dolefull chere and heuy herte
She myght no fetther gone
Lorde she sayd of heuen blyss
This daye thou me rede and wysse
God sende me some socoure sowne
Mayde mary moder fre
My prayer wyll I make to the
To amende my soȝefull mone
I am full of sorowe and care
And thre dayes I haue gone and moze
That mete had I none
By that she had her chyldren dyght
Forsothe it was full nere the nyght
As she satte by the well
In the arbere downe she laye
Tyll it was lyght of the daye

That foules gan synge and pell

U Here came an ape to seke his prape

One of her chyldren he bare awaye

Up in to one hye hyl

No wonder yf she were wo

The ape bare her chyldre bet fro

In swoynge downe she fell

In all the sorowe that the lady in was

There came rennyng a wyldde yponas

That was in dede there

In a swoynge as the lady laye

Her other chyldre she bare awaye

Her dyscomforte was the more

The lady was full heuy there

For the wyldde beestes awaye her chyldren bere

For sorowe her herte gan blede

To Ihesu cryste she made her mone

And syghynge forth she yode

There came a foule fayre of flyght

A gryffon he was called by ryght

Ouer the hylles hore

The foule was so moche of myght

That he wolde well bere a knyght

All armed yf he were

The lyonelle and the chyldre he toke he

And flewe in to an yle of the se

Bothe with hym he bare

The chyldre slepte in the lyonelle mouth

Of wele or wo it ne cowth

But god kepe it frome care

Whan the lyonelle had fote on londe

Stowrely she can by stonde

As beest that was stronge and wyld
Thozoughe goddes grace the gryffon she slewe
And of his flesshe ete ynoughe
And layde her by the chylde
The chylde souked the lyones
As it goddes wyll was
And the pappes gan to welde
The lyones gan of the chylde moche make
And all for her whelpes sake
She was therwith full mylde
With her fote she scraped a den
And brought the yonge chylde therein
And kepte it daye and nyght
Whan the lyones hongred sore
She ete of the gryffon euermore
That was so stronge and wyght
And as it was goddes wyll
The lyones loued the chylde full well
That was so sayre and bryght
The lady set her on a stone
To Ihesu cryste she made her mone
As a wofull wyght
Ihesu cryste kynge of blyss
This daye thou me rede and wysse
Of all kynges thou arte floure
As I was kynges doughter and quene
And empresse of Rome hath bene
And of maup a ryche toure
Throughe this treason that on me is wrought
To moche sorowe I am brought
And out of my honoure
This wordes lyfe I haue forlorne

Handwritten signature or scribble at the bottom of the page.

And my two chyldren frome me bozne
This lyfe I maye endure
A lozde the sorowe that I am in
well I wote it is for my synne
welcome be all thy sonde
To the worlde I wyll me neuer gyue
But serue the lozde whyles I lyue
Receyue me with thy honde
Downe by a hyl the waye she founde
And to the greke see she came
And wente by the stronde,
Before her an hauen she sawe
And a cyte with tounes gaye
The redy waye she founde
whiche brought her to the towne
A shyppe she founde redy bowne
with pylgrymes for to fare
She bad the shypmen golde and fe
with that she myght therein be
If that they wyll were
A bote she let vpon the flode
And rowed to the londe there the lady stode
A wyght man in he bare
By the mast they bade her sytte
Of her wo no man myght wyte
But euer she wepte full soze
The shypmen sayled by an yle syde
The mayster badde them they sholde abyde
For freshe water had they none
Besyde them there was a roche on hye
And a well streame rennyng by
Come rennyng ouer a stone

Than two men to londe they sende
And sowne to the well streame they wende
The well they founde as I you sayne
The lyonelle laye in her den
And was full gladde of these two men
Full sowne she had them slayne
So longe at an anker gan the ryde
These two men for to abyde
Tyll nowne was of the daye
Twelve men gan them dyght
With helme and with halbarde byght
To the londe wente they
They founde the lyonelle in her den
And a man chylde they sawe therin
With the lyonelle gan playe
Somwhyle he souked the lyonelle pap
And other whyle gan kysse and clap
For drede they flete awaye
They went agayne and tolde what they sawe
And how they founde a roche on hye
And in the ple a lyonelle den
And there the lyonelle began to playe
With a chylde that there in laye
And dyde flee bothe they men
The lady sayd that was so mylde
Mercy lordes that is my chylde
And on londe lette me ryue
A bote they sette vpon the flode
Alone the lady forth youde
Full soze wepte all they thenne
Whan she came to the roche on hye

She ranne as faste as she myght hye
With full soȝy mode

The lyonesse thozoughe goddes grace
Whan she sawe the ladyes face
Full fayre and styll she stode

Thozoughe the myght of mary mylde

67 She suffred the lady to take her chylde

07 / And to the see with the lady she yode

127 / Whan the shypmen the lyonesse se

They durst not come the londe nye
For fere they were nere wode

Some hente an oze and some hente a spete

67 This wyldde lyonesse for to mete

11 Out of the bote for to were

33 The lady in to the shyp they hente

Thertȝ fofte after the lyonesse sprete

There durst no man cum hym nere

29 / There durste no man cu m hym nere

116 / There myght men se game and gle

117 / Foure men lepe into to the see

916 / So aferde they were of the lyonesse there

116 / By the lady the lyonesse laye

116 / And with the chylde gan playe

58 / And no man wolde she dere

The shypmen dreme bp sayle of ryche herwe

The wynde frome londe they m blewe

Ouer that wanne streme

The fyrst londe that they myght se

Was a cyte with toures hye

That hyght Iherusalem

Full blythe they were of that syght

As is the foule whan it is lyght

Of that daye leme

Whan hyt was ebbe and no flode
 The shypmen and the lady to londe yode
 In that ryche realme
 ouer all the cyte wyde and longe
 Of that lady the worde spronge
 That there to londe was lence
 And how she hadde a lyonelle
 Brought with her out of wyldernesse
 The kynge after her sent
 The kynge bade lette for no thyng
 But the lyonelle with the lady to byng
 To a castell there nere hande
 Whan she to the kynge come
 For the emperesse of ryche rome
 The kynge full well her knewe
 The kynge her frayed of her face
 And she tolde hym of her care
 As a wofull wyght
 Thenne with the quene she dwelled styll
 And had maydens at her wyll
 To serue her daye and nyght
 The chyld that was fayre and fre
 The kynge made hym crystened be
 And sayd that Octauyan shall hyght
 Whan the chyld was of elde
 That he coude ryde and armes welde
 The kynge dubbed hym a knyght
 The lyonelle that was so wyld
 Dwelleth with the lady mylde
 Her comforte was the more
 The lady dwelled styll with the quene
 With Joye and game them betwene

Octa,

B.i

Hyf 9.
y 57 b

R 1
 Robert (Gouzon)
 John 1st of London

To couer her of her care
Euery daye he serued that lady bryght
To make her gladde with all his myght
Tyll she better mended were
In Iherusalem that lady dwelled styll
Of that other chylde tell you I wyll
That the ape frome her bare

U Here came an ape that was so wyld
Thozough the focest with the chylde
The holtcs was bothe hye and hoze
As the ape came ouer the strete
With a knyght gan she mete
The chylde as she bare
Tho fanght the knyght full longe
Agaynest the ape that was so stronge
His swerde he brake there
The ape lefte the chylde and awaye wente
The knyght frome her the chylde hente
And with hym gan he fare
For the with the chylde he rode then
And in a focest he mette outlawes ten
That moche were of myght
The knyght was neuer so wo
That his swerde was broke in two
That he myght not fyght
If the knyght were neuer so wo
The outlawes wane the chylde hym fro
That was so stoute and wyght
The knyght was wounded that daye
Unethys his horse bare hym awaye
So dolefully he was dyght

The outlawes set them on the grene
And layde the chylde them betwene
The chylde was fayre and on them lough
The mayster outlawe sayd then
It were grete shame for hardy men
The chylde yf we it slewe
I rede we bere it with moche pryde
To Iherusalem here besyde
And do hyt no harme
It is so fayre and gentyll boze
That we maye haue tresoure therfore
Golde and syluer full yarne
The two outlawes made them yare
To Iherusalem for to fare
It was so swete a wyght
There was no man that the chylde se
For dole they wepte with theyr eye
So fayre he was to syght
A burgeys of parys came full nere
That palmer had ben seven yere
Clement lunlayne he hyght
He sayd lordynges wyll ye the chylde sell
Ye for monaye yf ye wyll to vs it tell
Florences brode and bryght
For fyfty ponde sell hym they wolde
Clement sayd longe ye maye hym holde
Or ye hym so sell maye
I swere by myne hode
I wene can but lytell good
Suche wordes for to saye
Golde and syluer is to me nede
But. xx. li. I wyll you bede

Octa.

B. ii.

And make you redy paye
The chylde they hym solde
And .xx.li. he them tolde
And wente for the his waye
Whan clement had the chylde bought
He made a panyer to be be wrought
The chylde therin to lede
He toke hym the waye ryght
And asked hym with all his myght
What was his best reed
A noyse he gate hym also
In to fraunce with hym to go
The chylde for to fede
The burgeys of parys were full fayne
Full, many wente clement agayne
All rente was his wede

They clepte hym and kyst hym all
And brought hym home in to the hall
His wyfe was full blythe
She frayned hym the ryght dome
How that he by the chylde come
He tolde her full swythe
Dame in Iherusalem I hyt gete
And there I wolde hym not lete
The sothe I wyll you lythe
His wyfe answered with herte mylde
Syz it shall be my owne chylde
She kyste it many a sythe
Dame sayd clement whyle I palmer was
I gate this chylde with my fleshe
In the hethen londe

In to this londe I haue hym brought
Wherfore dame greue the nought
For ryche shall be thy wede
She answered hym with wordes fre
He is welcome to me so mote I the
For fayre I shall hym fede
And kepe hym with our owne chylde
Tyll he become of elde
And clothe them in one wede
Clement was therof full blythe
He dyd crysten the chylde swythe
It dwelled but a nyght
Anone after they hym calde
Florent the chylde hyght
Whan the chylde was seven yere olde
He was fayre wyse and bolde
The man that redeth ryght
In all the realme wyde and longe
Of the chylde the worde spronge
So fayre he was by syght
Euer the burgeys and his wyfe
Loued the chylde as theyr lyfe
With hym he was full dere
Whan he was seven yere and more
Clement set the chylde to loze
To be a chauncelere
Than clement betoke to Florent open two
And badde hym ouer the byrdege to go
To a bocher as ye shall here
To lerne the crafte to do
As his kynde was neuer to do so

Octa,

B.iii.

Suche games for to lere
Florent ouer the byrde gan go
Faste dypynge his oxen two
He sawe a semely syght
A squyer ther was as I you tell
A gerfaucon he bare to sell
With feathers folde full ryght
Florent to the squyer youde
And bothe his oxen to hym bode
For that faucon byght
The squyer was wonder blythe
And gaue to hym the faucon swythe
With herte good and lyght
The squyer hasted hym full swythe
His oxen awaye for to dypue
That he were out of syght
And florent to fle was full fayne
He wende he wolde haue his faucon agayne
He ranne with all his myght
He wente hym home the nexte waye
To clementes house as it laye
And he in went full ryght
He fede the faucon whyles he wolde
And sythe his fayre feathers folde
As the squyer had hym taught by syght
Clement the burgeys came en full sowne
Traytour where hast thou the oxen downe
That I toke the full ryght
Grette dole men myght se there
Clement bete the chylde full soze
That was so swete a wyght
With othe mete thou shalt not lyue

But that this kyte wyll the gyue
Both by daye and by nyght
As soze beten as the chylde stode
yet to his faucon he poude
His fethers for to ryght
Clementes wyfe thought wonder thore
That clement bete hym so soze
He asked his fader why
fader sayd the chylde for crystes oze
Be in peas and bete me no moze
But you wote why
wolde ye now a whyle beholde
How fayre he dothe his fethers folde
And how louely they lye
Ye wolde praye to god with mylde mode
That you hadde soulede halfe your good
Suche one for to bye
The burgeys wyfe besyde stode
full soze she rued in her mode
And sayd for thynne oze
for marys loue that mayde mylde
Haue mercy on your fayre chylde
And bete hym no moze
Let hym be at home and serue vs two
And lete our other sone out go
Eche daye for to lere
Suche grace for hym maye be wrought
To a better man he maye be brought
Than he a bocher were
After all this hyt befell
Clement began forty ponde to tell

615
In his chambꝛe there
Clement toke it to chylde florent
And to the byrdege he hym sent
The monaye his brother to bere
As the chylde thozough the cyte yede
He sawe where stode a fayre stede
That was stronge in euery stoure
The stede was whyte as ony mylke
The byrdell rarnes were of sylke
The molens were all gyld
Of wordes the chylde was wonder bolde
He asked how the stede sholde be solde
The monaye wolde he tell
The man badde hym for thyrty pounde
Of florences rede and rounde
No lesse he wolde hym sell
Florent sayde to lytell it wore
Ten pounde I shall gyue the more
And ten pounde he than tolde in faye
The squyer was wonder blythe
And toke the syluer to hym full swythe
And hasted hym awaye
Florent lepte lepte vp for to ryde
To clementes hous with moche pryde
And toke the hye waye
He thought to ryde in at the hall
He sought none other stall
He sette hym by there in faye
Florent was gladde as I you saye
And gaue his stede corne and haye
He kneled downe and fayre hym dyght

